

**Claim Amendments**

1-25. (canceled)

26. (currently amended) A method of monitoring and exchanging data between an external data storage unit and a computer, said computer comprising a connection port, said external data storage unit comprising a connecting device, an actuator, and a signal generator, said method comprising the steps of:

running a program on said computer and monitoring, with said program, said connection port for a signal from said external data storage unit;

operatively connecting said connecting device of said external data storage unit to said connection port of said computer;

manually actuating, by a physical movement of a user of said actuator, said signal generator in said external data storage unit, independently of all other functions and functioning of said computer and subsequent to operatively connecting said external data storage unit to said computer, and generating a signal;

detecting with said program the generated signal from said external data storage unit ~~and subsequently~~:

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initiating with said program a mutual data exchange between said external data storage unit and said computer in response to detection of said generated signal by said program; and

exchanging data between said external data storage unit and said computer.

27. (previously presented) The method as claimed in Claim 26, wherein said step of manually actuating said signal generator comprises executing a single, manual stroke.

28. (currently amended) The method as claimed in Claim 27, wherein said ~~signal generator~~ actuator in said data storage unit comprises a push button, and said step of manually actuating said signal generator comprises manually pushing said push button in a single, manual stroke.

29. (previously presented) The method as claimed in Claim 28, wherein said step of exchanging data comprises exchanging data packets.

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30. (previously presented) The method as claimed in Claim 29, wherein said program is configured to simultaneously control the exchange of data and monitor and detect an additional signal generated by said signal generator.

31. (previously presented) The method as claimed in Claim 30, wherein:

    said method further comprises, during the exchanging of data, continuing monitoring with said program said connection port for an additional signal from said external data storage unit, and, upon the generation of a signal by manual actuation of said signal generator, detecting the signal in between the transfer of two sequential data packets; and

    said step of exchanging data comprises synchronizing data of a pre-defined hard drive area of said computer with data of said external data storage unit.

32. (previously presented) The method as claimed in Claim 31, wherein:

    said signal generator is configured to be accessed by said

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program in said computer as a virtual drive, said virtual drive not being used as a traditional drive, but selected communication commands for control of said virtual drive by said program are automatically transformed for monitoring a signal generated by said signal generator, wherein said signal generator is accessible as a virtual drive only by said program and is not integrated into a data storage administration of said computer;

    said connecting device comprises one of: a USB cable, a FireWire cable, a CardBus, a PC Card, a parallel cable, a serial cable, or an infrared device, to permit connection with a corresponding connection port of a computer;

    said method further comprises the steps of:

        activating an optical indicator of said external data storage unit to provide a visual indication to a user that data is being exchanged, said optical indicator comprising a light-emitting device;

        temporarily storing the signal generated by said signal generator as a change in a memory log in said data storage unit;

        reading out the signal at a later point in time with said program; and

        newly initializing said memory log with the read out.

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33. (previously presented) The method as claimed in Claim 31, wherein:

said external data storage unit is integrated as an additional data storage drive into a data storage administration of said computer;

said connecting device comprises one of: a USB cable, a FireWire cable, a CardBus, a PC Card, a parallel cable, a serial cable, or an infrared device, to permit connection with a corresponding connection port of a computer;

said method further comprises the steps of:

activating an optical indicator of said external data storage unit to provide a visual indication to a user that data is being exchanged, said optical indicator comprising a light-emitting device;

temporarily storing the signal generated by said signal generator as a change in a memory log in said data storage unit;

reading out the signal at a later point in time with said program; and

newly initializing said memory log with the read out.

34-40. (canceled)

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41. (new) The method as claimed in Claim 26, wherein said actuator in said data storage unit comprises a push button, and said step of manually actuating said signal generator comprises manually pushing said push button in a single, manual stroke.

42. (new) The method as claimed in Claim 26, wherein said step of exchanging data comprises exchanging data packets.

43. (new) The method as claimed in Claim 26, wherein said program is configured to simultaneously control the exchange of data and monitor and detect an additional signal generated by said signal generator.

44. (new) The method as claimed in Claim 26, wherein:  
said method further comprises, during the exchanging of data, continuing monitoring with said program said connection port for an additional signal from said external data storage unit, and, upon the generation of a signal by manual actuation of said signal generator, detecting the signal in between the transfer of two sequential data packets; and

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said step of exchanging data comprises synchronizing data of a pre-defined hard drive area of said computer with data of said external data storage unit.

45. (new) The method as claimed in Claim 26, wherein:  
said signal generator is configured to be accessed by said program in said computer as a virtual drive, said virtual drive not being used as a traditional drive, but selected communication commands for control of said virtual drive by said program are automatically transformed for monitoring a signal generated by said signal generator, wherein said signal generator is accessible as a virtual drive only by said program and is not integrated into a data storage administration of said computer;

said connecting device comprises one of: a USB cable, a FireWire cable, a CardBus, a PC Card, a parallel cable, a serial cable, or an infrared device, to permit connection with a corresponding connection port of a computer;

said method further comprises the steps of:  
activating an optical indicator of said external data storage unit to provide a visual indication to a user that data is being exchanged,

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said optical indicator comprising a light-emitting device;  
temporarily storing the signal generated by said signal generator  
as a change in a memory log in said data storage unit;  
reading out the signal at a later point in time with said  
program; and  
newly initializing said memory log with the read out.

46. (new) The method as claimed in Claim 26, wherein:  
said external data storage unit is integrated as an additional  
data storage drive into a data storage administration of said  
computer;  
said connecting device comprises one of: a USB cable, a  
FireWire cable, a CardBus, a PC Card, a parallel cable, a serial  
cable, or an infrared device, to permit connection with a  
corresponding connection port of a computer;  
said method further comprises the steps of:  
activating an optical indicator of said external data storage unit  
to provide a visual indication to a user that data is being exchanged,  
said optical indicator comprising a light-emitting device;  
temporarily storing the signal generated by said signal generator

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as a change in a memory log in said data storage unit;  
reading out the signal at a later point in time with said  
program; and  
newly initializing said memory log with the read out.

47. (new) A method of monitoring and exchanging data in a system comprising an external data storage unit and a computer; said computer comprising a connection port; said external data storage unit comprising a connecting device, a pushbutton actuator, a signal generator, and a light-emitting device to provide a visual indication to a user that data is being exchanged, said connecting device comprising one of: a USB cable, a FireWire cable, a CardBus, a PC Card, a parallel cable, a serial cable, or an infrared device; said method comprising the steps of:

running a program on said computer and monitoring, with said program, said connection port for a signal from said external data storage unit;

operatively connecting said connecting device of said external data storage unit to said connection port of said computer;  
manually actuating, by pushing said pushbutton actuator, said

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signal generator in said external data storage unit, independently of all other functions and functioning of said computer and subsequent to operatively connecting said external data storage unit to said computer, and generating a signal;

detecting with said program the generated signal from said external data storage unit;

initiating with said program a data exchange between said external data storage unit and said computer in response to detection of said generated signal by said program; and

exchanging data between said external data storage unit and said computer.

48. (new) The method as claimed in Claim 47, wherein said step of exchanging data comprises exchanging data packets.

49. (new) The method as claimed in Claim 48, wherein said program is configured to simultaneously control the exchange of data and monitor and detect an additional signal generated by said signal generator.

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50. (new) The method as claimed in Claim 49, wherein:  
said method further comprises, during the exchanging of data,  
continuing monitoring with said program said connection port for an  
additional signal from said external data storage unit, and, upon the  
generation of a signal by manual actuation of said signal generator,  
detecting the signal in between the transfer of two sequential data  
packets; and

    said step of exchanging data comprises synchronizing data of a  
pre-defined hard drive area of said computer with data of said  
external data storage unit.